Forecasts by IMD

1208. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently issued a directive that no other agency than the Indian Meteorological Department can make public the annual long range monsoon forecasts;

(b) whether the predictions of the IMD since 1988 have had high failure rate (of nearly 65%), especially the gross failure of its forecast during the 2002 drought year; and

(c) whether IMD's impossing of its authority on similar research institutions in the country, can be extended to such institutions abroad, whose monsoon forecast are easily accessible to Indian media over websites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) The Government has not issued any directive that no other agency than the IMD can make public the annual long range monsoon forecasts. Since such forecasts have policy implications, IMD not only consults other organizations while arriving at the forecast, but also takes the approval of the Ministry before issuing the same. Research groups working in the area of monsoon forecasting are free to publish their forecast as research results.

(b) The long Range Monsoon forecasts of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) are made after consulting all the Research Organizations whose inputs are fully taken into account. During the last 17 years (1988-2004), IMD forecasts were qualitatively correct in 15 years (*i.e.* 88%). The exception was during 2002 and 2004 both of which were drought years. The 2002 drought was due to exceptionally low rainfall during the month of July (49% of long term period average) caused by unexpected sudden warming of sea surface over equatorial central Pacific that started in the month of June. This exceptionally deficient rainfall of July 2002 was not predicted by any prediction group in India or abroad.

(c) Monsoon forecasting being a research subject across the world, IMD encourages research on monsoon forecasting by other scientists outside IMD also.